

Submission – Draft Central West and Orana Regional Plan

Cowra Council

20 June 2016

Council acknowledge and supports the work of Department of Planning – Western Region Office as well as Centroc, Centroc Planners Group the in the preparation of this document.

Council would however like some clarity as to the ultimate purpose of the Plan. Is it a strategic land use planning document? Additionally, how is this document to be administered by Council Officers and will it become an additional statutory layer of consideration and be considered as part of a 79C assessment? Is the planning system just going back to the days of Regional Plans incorporated into layers of regulation?

The hierarchy of cities, Centres, Villages and Towns needs to be revised – Cowra is not a Village.

General

- Greater clarity around the categorisation of town/villages as there is significant differences between Cowra and Grenfell and Cowra and Cumnock. Cowra should not be considered a village.
- Cowra is a centre for a large surrounding population and the centre of 5 major transport links including Sydney, Newcastle and Canberra via the Lachlan Valley way to the Hume Highway and the Mid Western Highway via Bathurst to Sydney via the Blue Mountains.
- A hierarchy of airports and hospital services is required to be shown on the mapping. Cowra has a District hospital which services the surrounding areas and the Cowra Airport with an approved 21 lots subdivision with an approved 21 lot subdivision being offered under an EOI.
- The southern linkages for the Central West area including Cowra to Canberra are significantly understated and should be detailed on the mapping. It is 2 hours to Canberra and approximately 4.5 hours to Sydney from Cowra.
- Not enough focus is place on the importance of the inland rail system in this document.
- How is the Government going to work with Council's? Is additional funding going to be allocated?
- There are some inconsistencies in the formatting of this document e.g. should all Goals have 'Principals' and the mapping needs closer scrutiny.

Introduction

- Orana appears only to refer to Dubbo are there no other significant areas?
- No focus on the linkages to Canberra in terms of export possibilities or tourism – only 2 hours drive.

- Significant renewable energy projects are currently being investigated in Cowra.
- There are many significant events in this region not only Mt Panorama which can be mentioned e.g. the Canowindra Balloon Challenge.
- Mapping needs to be at either end of the data, it is currently in the middle page.
- Hierarchy of hospitals required – Cowra is a District hospital.
- Hierarchy of airports required – Cowra has a thriving airport but no commuter service.
- Orana and the Central West's data need to be split.
- The population and housing data and words appear to be painting this area in a poor light this wording should be amended to appear positive in most instances.

Vision

- No reference to time to drive to Canberra or the connection to the Hume Highway for transport to and from Sydney. This is an important transport link for the Central West for heavy vehicles that cannot traverse the Blue Mountains.
- Clarity needed around Irrigation areas as they don't appear to be correct.
- Mapping seems limited perhaps a series of maps would better show case the area and its assets.
- The Blayney to Demondrille Railway system is not shown on the maps.

Delivering the Plan

- The CENTROC Planners group should be listed in the coordination and monitoring committee for this document.

Goal 1

- Canberra not mentioned in terms of improved access to domestic and international markets this is an important market for the south of the Central West including Cowra.
- The map needs to be moved as previously mentioned.

Goal 2

- No mention of the important transport links to Melbourne or Canberra.
- Blayney to Demondrille Railway system should remain a significant focus in the region.
- Cowra is located on the intersection of 5 major transport links and is strategically placed half way between Brisbane and Melbourne – this should be mentioned.
- There are substantial truck movements through Cowra using the Lachlan Valley Way from the Hume Highway for heavy vehicles that cannot use the Blue Mountains from Sydney and Newcastle. Consideration needs to be given to this transport route including a bypass of Cowra and a second bridge crossing. This route continues to get more traffic as transport to the region uses this connection.
- Figure 10 – the map needs to show transport links going into the other regions for clarity not simply stopping at the border, this does not show a clear picture.

Goal 3

- Figure 12 - What is meant by 'biophysical strategic agricultural land' in figure 12? Biophysical in the dictionary means a 'the branch of biology that applies the methods physics to the study of

biological structures and processes’. Does this apply to this map and the land resource indicated? The area identified on the map as biophysical strategic agricultural land appears to closely correlate with land mapped as Alluvial River flats on the Agricultural land Suitability Map for Cowra Shire. Are we revisiting the 1990 land use strategies? Cowra was advised that the previous mapping was not to be used as a land use tool?

- Irrigation areas seem to be incorrect.
- Figure 15 does not reflect the current mapping on the ‘Common Ground’ Website by the Department of Industry in terms of current Exploration Licences.
- Figure 17 – irrigation areas may be incorrect.

Goal 4

- Population figures need to be split between the Central West and Orana.
- Hierarchy of towns and villages needs to be reviewed – Cowra is not a village.
- The government commitment should be working with all communities and not just with the Cities of Orange and Bathurst!
- Not all towns and villages are vulnerable – Cowra is ‘fit for the future and is currently attracting new job creating business.
- Universal housing and access for disabled persons should be a consideration for an aging population in the region and is not mentioned.
- The Government needs to support the Local Aboriginal Land Services to be available and open for community engagement and to encourage and support entrepreneurial enterprises in partnerships with government agencies.

Appendix A – this list should include the full classification of all Cities, Centres, Villages and Towns. Smaller centres are as important to the region as a City or a Centre and should not be left off.